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ALEA: Fall into Safe Practices this Weekend

MONTGOMERY – Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day commemorates the spirit of exploration and signifies the beginning of the Fall Season. During this extended holiday weekend, many citizens will conduct various activities such as taking the boat out one last time before the winter season, grilling out with friends and family, or participating in October festivities. Regardless of the activity, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) encourages everyone to keep safety in mind by identifying and taking measures to mitigate hazards leading to injury or crashes on Alabama’s roadways and waterways.

“The tragic consequences of impaired and reckless driving can be avoided if we all make safety our number one priority while driving or operating a vessel,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “In addition to the holiday, several of Alabama’s school systems will be enjoying their Fall Break, which equates to more students and younger drivers traveling the roads during this extended holiday weekend.”

Secretary Taylor urges parents to use this opportunity to review Alabama’s traffic and boating laws, and to ensure young drivers have a clear understanding of the states [Graduated Driver License Law \(GDL\)](#), a three-stage licensing process that places certain restrictions on young drivers who need time to acquire experience before driving without supervision or restriction.

In addition to reviewing the state’s GDL law, ALEA offers the following safety tips ahead of the extended weekend and for the Fall season:

TRAVEL SAFETY: Plan trips carefully and notify someone of your travel plans, route and estimated time of arrival. Ensure every occupant in your vehicle, front and back, remain buckled, avoid speeding and continually self-evaluate to ensure driving distractions are avoided.

SEASONAL CHANGES: While local forecasts call for a mild and dry weekend, it is a good idea to go ahead and prepare your vehicle for fall temperature changes and inspect it before traveling long distances. Always weather check your route and have a back-up plan in place should the weather delay your arrival. Know that moisture or leaves on roadways can create traction issues, and the best defense is to slow down. Remain alert for deer or other wildlife that may attempt to cross the road. Prepare for reduced daylight hours and extend following distances during darkness, inclement weather and peak travel hours.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS: Drink responsibly, and never drink and drive or operate a water vessel while impaired. Think of the ramifications of a DUI/BUI or injuring someone before getting behind the wheel. Designate a safe, sober driver, utilize a ride-share service or call a cab. Individuals younger than age 21 are prohibited from possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages.

MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS: For some motorcyclists, fall represents the best time of year to ride and enjoy the open road. Motorists, double-check your blind spots and allow plenty of distance between your vehicle and a motorcycle. Motorcyclists should always wear a safety helmet, stay alert and watch for road debris, potholes and wildlife, and be sure to navigate turns cautiously.